LIBRARY

MINISTRY OF HEALTH
LIBRARY

RURAL DISTRICT OF BRIDGWATER

ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH
FOR THE YEAR 1943

G.H.PRINGLE, M.R.C.S. (Eng.) L.R.C.P. (Lond.), D.P.H.
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

RURAL DISTRICT OF BRIDGWATER

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH FOR 1943

Health Department,
Town Hall,
Bridgwater.

July, 1944.

To the Chairman and Members of the
Bridgwater Rural District Council.

Gentlemen,

I have pleasure in presenting my Third Annual Report on the health of the Rural District. The report is in the same abbreviated form as its predecessor, as in accordance with instructions received from the Ministry of Health certain statistics and other information have been withheld.

The central office, established in 1942, for the Medical Officer of Health of the Bridgwater Borough and Rural District, has continued to work smoothly and has co-ordinated the work between the two authorities and with the County Health Department in the best possible manner.

I have to express my thanks to the Chairman and Members of the Public Health Committee for their support, to Mr. Maile and his assistant for their collaboration, and to the Heads of other Departments for their assistance during the year.

I am, Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,
Your obedient Servant,

G.H. PRINGLE.

I. VITAL STATISTICS

REGISTERED BIRTHS

	Male	Female	Total
Live Births - Legitimate	170	167	337
do. - Illegitimate	13	17	30
	183	184	367

	Male	Female	Total
Still Births - Legitimate	5	7	12
do. - Illegitimate	4	-	4
	9	7	16

DEATHS

206 deaths were registered as having occurred in the Rural District during the year. After deducting the deaths of 28 non-residents and adding the deaths of 69 normal residents which took place outside the Rural District, the net total comes to 245 Rural District deaths. Of these 118 were male and 127 female.

CAUSES OF DEATH	1943 Males	1943 Females
All causes ... ... Total 245	118	127
1. Typhoid and para-typhoid fevers	-	-
2. Cerebro-spinal fever	3	1
3. Scarlet fever	-	-
4. Whooping cough	-	1
5. Diphtheria	-	-
6. Tuberculosis of respiratory system	5	5
7. Other forms of tuberculosis	2	1
8. Syphilitic diseases	-	-
9. Influenza	14	7
10. Measles	-	-
11. Acute poliomyelitis and polioencephalitis	-	-
12. Acute infantile encephalitis	-	-
13. Cancer of buccal cavity and oesophagus (m) uterus (f)	2	3
14. Cancer of stomach and duodenum	5	4
15. Cancer of breast	-	2
16. Cancer of all other sites	11	7
17. Diabetes	1	-
18. Intra-cranial vascular lesions	9	27
19. Heart disease	19	24
20. Other diseases of the circulatory system	1	2
21. Bronchitis	5	4
22. Pneumonia	8	4
23. Other respiratory diseases	-	2
24. Ulcer of stomach or duodenum	1	-
25. Diarrhoea under 2 years	-	-
26. Appendicitis	-	2
27. Other digestive diseases	5	3
28. Nephritis	4	4

contd.

CAUSES OF DEATH	1943 Males	Females
29. Puerperal and post-abortion sepsis	-	-
30. Other maternal causes	-	-
31. Premature births	2	2
32. Congenital malformations, birth injuries, infantile diseases	6	3
33. Suicide	-	1
34. Road traffic accidents	-	2
35. Other violent causes	4	-
36. All other causes	11	16

INFANTILE MORTALITY.

	Male	Female	Total
Deaths of children under 1 year			
- Legitimate	11	5	16
- Illegitimate	1	2	3
	12	7	19

II. INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

The following table sets out the cases in the Rural District notified during 1942:-

	TOTAL CASES NOTIFIED
Acute Poliomyelitis	1
Cerebro-spinal Meningitis	3
Diphtheria	2
Dysentery	-
Enteric Fever (including paratyphoid)	-
Erysipelas	2
Measles	139
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	1
Pneumonia	9
Puerperal Pyrexia	1
Scarlet Fever	41
Small Pox	-
Whooping Cough	16

Measles.

Measles was prevalent during the first half of the year, but there were no deaths although 139 cases were notified.

Scarlet Fever.

Scarlet Fever with 41 cases showed moderate prevalence in the last quarter. The bulk of the cases were in the North Petherton and Woolavington areas. The disease was of a mild type and no special comment is necessary.

III. TUBERCULOSIS.

There were 38 cases of respiratory and 11 cases of non-respiratory tuberculosis notified during the year.

The number of respiratory cases is 11 higher than in the previous year, but although war-time conditions may have some bearing on this, one must not overlook the effect of newer methods of diagnosis.

IV. CONTAGIOUS SKIN DISEASES ETC.

The number of Rural District cases of scabies treated at the Old Isolation Hospital was as follows:-

Male Adults	18
Female Adults	62
Children	171
	251

No changes have been made in the treatment arrangements which continue to function satisfactorily.

The total number of cases treated is slightly less than the previous year, and it is satisfactory to note that the majority of the cases were treated at an early stage.

V. DIPHTHERIA IMMUNISATION.

The following table shows the number of children who completed a full course of immunisation during the year:-

Age under 5 years	Age 5 - 15 years	Total
329	314	643

The percentages of the child population in the Rural District considered immunised at the end of the year were

Under 5 years - 62%
5 - 15 years - 90%

As in previous years each village, or a special centre serving groups of villages, was visited once or twice during the year, or whenever there were sufficient children to warrant a special visit. The work is not easy to arrange in a scattered rural area, and I am extremely grateful for the assistance and enthusiasm I have received from District Nurses, School Teachers, and voluntary helpers.

The best method of protection is to give each child two immunising injections at one year of age, and a third reinforcing injection early in school life.

VI. HOUSING.

Housing conditions have not improved during the year. A resume of the work done under this heading appears in the Chief Sanitary Inspector's Report.

VII. WATER SUPPLY.

With the exception of Nether Stowey, the regular samples taken from the Council's supplies have been reported on as satisfactory.

Nether Stowey.

Investigations made in July showed that certain old service pipes were worn out and that there was some risk of pollution of the supply. Pending the replacement of these pipes consumers were advised to boil their drinking water.

The general position was also considered, and as a result, the chlorinator was moved from its site near the hydrostat to a more advantageous situation.

The whole of the work was completed early this year, and samples taken since have been satisfactory.

VIII. EMERGENCY WORK.

During the year the Health Department has been concerned directly or indirectly with many problems of an emergency nature. These include Civil Defence work, the medical aspects of Rest and Shelter Schemes, Emergency Water Supplies, medical details in connection with Local Invasion Committees etc.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CHIEF SANITARY INSPECTOR
FOR 1943.

Mr. Chairman & Gentlemen,

I beg to submit my Annual Report for the year ending 31st December, 1943.

This Report is again very much abbreviated and should be considered only as a summary of the work carried out during the year.

Complaints and Nuisances.

The number of complaints investigated during the year was 93, an increase of 16 on the previous year. In many cases nuisances were abated as the result of informal action but it was found necessary to serve 15 Abatement Notices, an increase of 4 on 1942.

Of the nuisances found, 64 were abated during the year, although considerable difficulty was experienced in getting work carried out, owing to difficulty in obtaining materials and the shortage of labour. The position in this respect improved towards the end of the year but in many cases it was necessary to extend the time limit set out in abatement notices, in order to give owners of property the fullest opportunity of complying with notices. The number of visits made in connection with nuisances was 373.

Housing.

Some difficulty was also found in getting housing repairs dealt with, but in a number of cases minor repairs and improvements were carried out.

As pointed out in my report for last year, deterioration of property is progressive and the virtual impossibility of carrying out normal maintenance work and painting is having its inevitable effect. It is to be hoped that the Ministry of Works' scheme for the issue of Certificates of Essentiality will, in some measure, alleviate this serious position, although up to the present, owners of property have not taken advantage of the scheme to the extent which had been hoped. At the end of the year, Certificates of Essentiality had been issued in respect to three houses for the carrying out of work to the extent of £450.

The number of houses inspected under the Housing Acts was 42. 7 houses were represented as unfit for habitation and incapable of being rendered fit at a reasonable cost and Demolition Orders were made by the Council in respect to eleven properties whilst in two cases, formal undertakings not to re-let were accepted.

(a) Excessive Rents.

A number of enquiries were made in regard to alleged contraventions of the Rent (Restrictions) Acts and in several cases it was possible to get rents reduced by informal action.

(b) Overcrowding.

Ten complaints of overcrowding were received and as a result of informal action two cases were abated. In the remaining cases where overcrowding was confirmed, the Council decided to take no action as the "permitted number" was only exceeded by half a unit.

Bakehouses.

Eighteen visits were made to bakehouses. Informal notices served were duly complied with.

General Sanitation.

The following improvements were carried out, generally as the result of informal action:-

W.C.'s	15
Baths	10
Sinks	15
Drainage Systems	11
Lavatory Basins	10

A number of other minor improvements were also carried out.

Meat and Food.

Every effort was made during the year to maintain the regular inspection of meat and other food at retail shops and 189 visits were made for this purpose.

It is also the practice to inspect the meat of animals killed for home consumption under licences issued by the Food Control Committee, and in view of the percentage of animals found to be diseased, this practice has been found to be justified.

I give below details of meat condemned during the year:-

Beasts.

62 lbs. of beef
1 head and tongue
1 liver

Sheep.

2 carcasses and organs
1 pluck.

Pigs.

30 lbs. pork
16 heads and tongues
7 mesenteries and intestines
3 plucks.

Other Foods.

144 tins of various foods
2 lbs. cheese.

Milk and Dairies.

The number of inspections carried out during the year was 588, an increase of 216 on the previous year.

The standard of cleanliness in milk production is still not all that could be desired, although most milk producers are doing their best under most difficult conditions. An unsatisfactory feature is the delay which often takes place between the end of milking and collection of milk from the farm premises. If, as frequently happens, milk churns are exposed to hot sunshine whilst awaiting collection the keeping quality of the milk is adversely affected.

The number of producers on the register at the end of 1943 was 783 including 144 producer retailers. The number of producers of T.T. milk was 15 and there were also 32 producers of Accredited milk. The number of retail purveyors of milk was 17.

The sampling of designated milk was continued during the year, 129 samples of T.T. and Accredited milk being taken.

37 samples of milk were taken for testing for the presence of Tubercle Bacilli, and 3 samples were found to give positive results. Appropriate action was taken in these cases by the County Council.

48 new registrations were granted during the year, 47 for wholesale purveyors and 1 for wholesale and retail purveyor.

The efforts made to get improved conditions at dairy farms during the year, produced the following results:-

New cowshed floors and improved drainage	4
New cowsheds	4
New dairies	7
Main water supply to cowsheds ...	3

Infectious Diseases.

63 disinfections were carried out during the year, 81 visits being made in connection with infectious diseases.

Verminous Premises.

17 visits were made to verminous premises and 10 dwellings were treated for vermin.

Civil Defence.

A considerable amount of time was spent during the year on various emergency work such as Fire Guard arrangements, Rest and Feeding Centres, Emergency Mortuary arrangements, Food Decontamination etc.

I am, Mr. Chairman & Gentlemen,
Your obedient Servant,

F.A. MAILE,

Chief Sanitary Inspector.